

Dark Horizons

issue 13 • spring 1976



DH13 £ spring 1976



Produced and Edited for the BFS by Stephen Jones.

FICTION:

The Ghost, The Bottle & Paradise..... Simon Cunsley 6
Descent..... Julian A. Le Saux 23
The Dallazuel Rift..... John Hurley 31

ARTICLES:

Influences in Horror Fiction..... Michael Sims 4
They Who Oppose Chaos part three:
Related, Fragmentary and New Heroes..... Adrian Cole 17
Paradox: The Worlds of M. C. Escher..... David Sutton 25
M. P. Shiel: An Appreciation..... Michael Barrett 35

POETRY:

Ultramarine..... Gaynor Chapman 22
Lullaby for a Baby Horror-story Writer.... Marion Pitman 33
About the Painting of the Split Man..... Stephen Walker 34

ARTWORK:

Front Cover (Innsmouth), Pages 2, 3, 15 by Jim Pitts.
Pages 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 34 by Russell Nicholeon.
Pages 5, 23, 33, 35 by Alan Hunter.
Pages 6, 16, 30 by Stephen E. Fabian.
Pages 18, 20 by Chris Beaumont.
Page 22 by Stephen Jones.
Pages 26 (Self-Portrait 1923), 27 (Witch 1931), 28 (top:
Black-line block for Circle Limit III 1959; Bottom: Basic
motif used for Eight Heads 1922), 29 (Dragon 1952) by
M. C. Escher.
Back Cover by David Lloyd.

Special Thanks to the Escher Foundation - Haags Gemeentemuseum - The Hague for their permission to reproduce the illustrations on Pages 26 - 29.



DARK HORIZONS is published three times a year by the British Fantasy Society. Membership is £1.50 or \$5.00 US & Canada per annum, which should be sent to: Brian Mooney, The Secretary, The British Fantasy Society, 447A Porters Avenue, Dagenham, Essex, RM9 4ND, England.

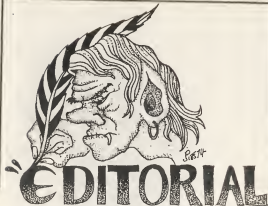


DARK HORIZONS 13 is Copyright (c) by Stephen Jones and the BFS. All copyright to their material are owned by the individual writers and artists who contributed to this issue. Editorial address is: 33 Wren House, Tachbrook Estate, London, SW1V 3QD, England.



BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY

By
stephen
jones



Firstly, a word about the cover: Jim Pitts' lovely Insmouth drawing comes from a new portfolio entitled LOVECRAFTIAN CHARACTERS AND OTHER THINGS, and is only one of six 8" x 10" illustrations Jim has adapted from Lovecraft's stories; enclosed in a decorated folder, there is also a booklet containing a short article about HPL by Lovecraftian scholar Dr. Dirk Mosig, and a biography of Jim by Jon Harvey. This is a limited edition of 750 copies, and is available at £1.50 + 25p p&p (£4.00 inclusive in U.S.A. or Canada) from Jon Harvey, 37 Hawkins Lane, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs, England. This is sure to become a much sought-after collectors item in years to come!

This issue sees the debut in DARK HORIZONS of Simon Cunsley with an amusing tale of Heroic Quest, The Ghost, The Bottle & Paradise, in which the hero, Oswyd Blitt, learns that Paradise means many things to different people; the story is illustrated throughout by Russ Nicholson in his usual inimitable style. The other two stories are by writers who have both appeared previously within these pages: Julian A. Le Saux's Splat! in DH9 was very well received, and he returns this issue with another off-beat fantasy; Alan Hunter - who did such a fine job embellishing Julian's poem The End in issue 11 - did the clever heading illo. John Hurley's previous story in this magazine, A Shade Upon the Radiance in DH10, was, like this issue's The Dallazuel Rift, also a science-fantasy, although I feel it is in no way out of place in this magazine; an excellent Steve Fabian reprint heads the story.

Michael Sims' article looks behind the life-style of the modern horror story writer and discovers how an author's background influences his work. Adrian Cole - whose new novel MADNESS EMERGING has recently been published in this country by Robert Hale - contributes the third, and final part of his general review of the Heroic Fantasy genre, this time concentrating on Related, Fragmentary and New Heroes; the article features another full-pager by Fabian as well as a couple of fillers by a new artist to DH, Chris Beaumont. David Sutton has revised an article which originally appeared in ARC 2, in which he takes a look at the paradox inherent in the artwork of M. C. Escher; my sincere thanks are due to the Escher Foundation for their kind permission in allowing me to reprint a selection of Escher's work. Finally, Mike Barratt takes an appreciative look at M. P. Shiel, a writer whose adventure/fantasies will perhaps gain the recognition they deserve since Arkham House recently published a collection of his best short stories. The more observant readers may have noticed that the Writer/Artist in Fandom feature does not appear in this issue; this has been temporarily dropped to allow me to catch up on the backlog of contributions, but I hope it will return in a few issues time as an occasional series.

Once again there is a very fine and varied selection of poetry, Gaynor Chapman, Marion Pitman and Stephen Walker all contribute to this sadly neglected form of fantasy, and this issue is completed by another longer than usual letters column, and an excellent back cover Medusa by David Lloyd.

As always, I must thank those artists whose work is dotted throughout the magazine - without their continued support DARK HORIZONS would be greatly lacking visually.

And to end with, please keep sending in your LoC's (whether or not they're printed every single one helps) and your contributions (remember to enclose a s.a.e.), and I hope you'll try to be here next issue as it promises to be something special!

Influences in Horror Fiction

by Michael Sims



One of the most interesting points for thought after reading a Horror story is to imagine the circumstances under which the story was written. The influences on the life of the author have a great bearing on the style of his work, so that it is of no little importance to consider whether a change of life style would have created a change in artistic style. Was the writer married, or was he single? Was he professional or amateur? Did he have all day to write or was he forced to write only in his spare time? It is to no great advantage to have to spend all day at work, then to come home and immediately place yourself in the correct frame of mind conducive to good writing. Even worse if there is a wife who needs help with the washing up or a child to play with. There can be little doubt that the life style of a man such as Poe coloured his writing, for no matter how great a natural love for the darker side of things was inborn in him, the poverty and grief which he knew allowed his gift of eloquent woe to greater ends.

The life pattern of modern man is itself alien to the emotive force of Horror fiction. For the most part living in clean, bright, centrally heated homes, with human companionship so near, even through such devices as the telephone and television, it becomes increasingly difficult to grasp the feeling of living your work that writers of old must have had. Perhaps it is over-romantic to think of the writer of the past sitting by the light of a flickering candle in an otherwise darkened room, alone with his imagination, with no electronic devices to interrupt his mood. So by living the Horror, or the atmosphere of it, could the same be transmitted onto the paper. The writer of today must think himself into the mood by ignoring his surroundings rather than being able to feed from them as would be ideal.

Notwithstanding the sterile atmosphere of modern life, one of the least advantageous influences on today's writers is the media of the film; cinema, and to a lesser extent in the Horror genre, television. To say that all the best Horror stories were written before the advent of screen Horror would be wholly inaccurate, but it cannot be ignored that the ability to see that which previously could only be imagined from the written word has an immense effect on the reader of today's stories, and indeed on the writer himself. To take just one example, that of the vampire story, one of the finest, and most basic of Horror vehicles. No matter how subtle the writer is, once it becomes obvious that the story is a vampire one then the images conjured in the mind are those of Schreck, Lugosi, Lee, or whichever cinematic character the story happens to remind us of. The force behind the writing is therefore diminished because the vital ingredient of imagination on the part of the reader has been dulled by memories of a film, or worse, of the circumstances under which we went to see the film. So a writer of a vampire story may today be faced with a reader who does not pale at thoughts of the blood-sucking monster but rather one whose mind is busy recalling the deli-

ghte of sitting in the backrow with his girlfriend. The basic and still much respected ingredients of the genre have now been overexposed by the film world so that their power does not work on today's audiences.

Not only then have the Horror films had an adverse affect on writing, but I would hold that they have taken a lot of the enjoyment away from reading a Horror story. The words conjure cinematic images more often than the private images that they should do.

There is always the temptation to regard works old as being works of genius, but even allowing for the sentimental regard with which stories of the past are held today, there is a stylistic difference between them and their modern counterparts that is not lacking from the influence of screen Horror. For while a story was effective in 1900, seventy six years later it will not entiefy, more often than not, because its message has been transmitted through the means of the cinema screen and its modern readers will be too familiar with its horrors to be convinced by them. This is the danger behind Horror films that they over-familiarise us with the elements that writers use to frighten us.

Of course there are two ways of looking at criticism (to digress slightly for a moment). Many people, Ramsey Campbell among them (L'INCROYABLE CINEMA NO.4) would argue that art must live by today's standards, so that a film made fifty years ago must stand up to the techniques of today's critics before it can be called valid. This seems too easy a way out, for it places no importance on circumstance, and indeed it seems to ignore the influences surrounding the making of the film, and the writing of the story in the case of fiction. Obviously this is not to suggest that if a story turns out poorly that excuse should be found for the writer, and if we discover that his wife has just left him it should alter our opinion of the story; but if a work of art is considered to be valid when it first appears, then it is not accurate, in thirty years time, to say it is no longer valid if it does not affect a new audience in the same way. The art has not changed, merely the views and tastes of people. Is their opinion better because a few years have pased? It can only be accurate to take historical perspective into consideration, and if an old Horror story or film fails to ignite its audience today then we must look for a better reason than merely to suggest that it is no longer a valid piece of work.

Would it be wholly valid to explore the avenue of thought that an influence on writing today is the greater availability of fiction to the mass public? After all it is within almost everyones grasp today to be able to buy a book that they want to read. If not then there are always the public libraries. This availability was not always the case, so that a second rate work of fiction today will reach a far wider audience than the best work of yesterday. Allowing for his distaste of the general public, and that it was not his intention to write for readers acclaim, it is interesting to consider how the writing of H. P. Lovecraft would have been affected had his stories reached a wider audience during his life, and the difference it may have made had he had a publishers deadlines to meet.

To analyse the different styles of writing over the years would be too lengthy a task to attempt here but it is worth considering the current trends in the light of the theme of the influence of the Horror cinema. There seems a definite trend towards stories whose every intention is vagueness. Over-explored themes are being deserted for stories of minimum plotlines but maximum exploration of the mind of modern man. The intention with most new stories in the Horror genre seems to be to name man as the monster, his way of life as

the creator, and his mind as the catalyst which sparks the horror. In Britain one of the few young writers to make a real impression is Ramsey Campbell, who has been called "a new messiah" (Dave Sutton, SHADOW No.20) (Books by Basil Cooper and Charles Birkin were always described as being by promising newcomers and yet both were middle-aged). Ramsey Campbell's style, now, is certainly not traditional but admits that the horrors of old are ineffective today and so attempts a new approach. The meaning behind the words is always obscure and indeed the vagueness is often so worked for that any feeling of mood becomes lost as the puzzle develops. Stories





that are obvious are never satisfactory but again stories which baffle even the most careful of readers are infuriatingly unsatisfactory as well. Ramsey Campbell has the right approach, and definitely the ability to get beyond this overdeveloped vagueness so that his stories bode well for the future. (How pompous that sounds!)

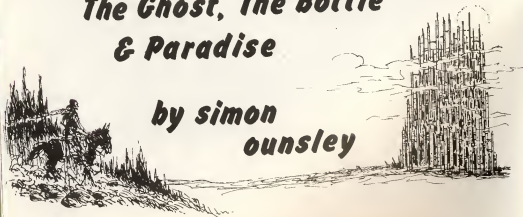
Thinking about Ramsey Campbell's stories, which are often subjective in content, brings along another tangent to follow, the method each individual uses to judge the worthiness of a story or film. A film I saw recently was a disaster, poorly scripted, weakly acted, in fact the only saving grace was the leading lady, whose sexualty was the one reason I sat through it to the end. Yet a middle-aged woman seeing the same film wouldn't have held the same view, (probably not anyway), so would have held a different opinion of the film. Therefore, from what viewpoint should a film be judged? In all probability the only accurate way to judge anything is by looking at it from both a subjective and an objective point of view. Only by so doing can you hope to form a complete and true opinion. It is the fact that most critics take a subjective viewpoint that causes all arguments upon the validity of a work

of art. Its merits to one person are its defects to another. By taking an objective view into consideration as well, a better developed opinion can be reached.

Thinking in terms of fiction, the influences upon the writer are numerous. There are the influences of his life-style, mentioned previously, as well as the influences of his past which are just as important. Also of importance will be the aims of the writer, his market, as well as his artistic ambitions. In today's modern world the influences of society seem opposed to the creation of effective fictional Horror (true life being horrible enough as well as lacking mystery) with the emphasis on the comfort of the body, and yet the Horror story lives on, and will survive even in its oldest forms for two very opposed reasons. Firstly it is an escape valve from the horrors of the real world, and secondly it acts as a reminder that despite the modern sophistication of living we should never get too complacent.

The Ghost, The Bottle & Paradise

***by simon
ounsley***



Into the city of Gleeg, whose towers compete to rise above the sky and pierce the sun, there rode a wanderer astride a shaggy mule. His name was Oewyld Blitt. In former days he was a carpenter and his hands were badly scarred from years of eplinters, misplaced nails and hammer blows of careless aim. Yet there burned in his eyes a fire not often seen in those of his profession, though companions of the saints and the sweethearts of heroes know it well. Oewyld Blitt was on a quest.

The day was growing older and the wanderer had travelled far since dawn: across the Stream of Legion Sorrows, through the Wood of Fearful Aspect, down along the Pass of Shifting Shadows to the edges of the Wilderness of Moorg.

Here lay Gleeg. Strange dwarven ones had built it, so folk claimed and the builders had a great desire to live among the clouds. So they made the towers exceeding high, the lower storeys being hollow and the rooms all in the top few dozen floors. Oewyld thought to spend the night in Gleeg and ask around the town for what he sought. Should he have no luck in Gleeg, he would continue on the morrow through the wilderness of Moorg, heading for the haunted hills of Hal.

He came upon the tavern called the Spectre of Gleeg and thinking this a likely place, he climbed the ninety stairways till he reached the lowest floor, in between a rainbow and the moon.

"How now, landlord" said Blitt, depositing his grubby valise upon the tavern's shiny floor. I seek a room for the night, a good meal and a ghost."

The landlord eyed the traveller suspiciously. A scrappy man was Blitt with well-cut clothes all threadbare and worn, a carpenter's scarf, equally worn and a blunderbuss with a rusty barrel.

"Well" said the landlord, "our prices are high. Have you the money to pay?"

Blitt produced a purse containing many golden pieces.

"Here" he said, rattling the coins, "the last of my wealth. I think it will pay for my stay."



"Indeed" said the landlord, his eyes lighting up. "I shall show you to your room. Do you desire to look out on a rainbow or the moon?"

"The moon, I think" said Blitt, "for the rainbow will dazzle my poor tired eyes."

The landlord led him to a room of generous magnitude, adorned with walls of polished alabaster.

"Dinner is at eight" said the landlord, "it is roasted ear of piggy elephant with carrots and glensesriots."

"It sounds delicious. But tell me, is there a ghost hereabouts?"

"Oh yes" said the landlord, looking a little worried, "does this worry you?"

"Far from it" Blitt replied, "a ghost is what I seek. Tell me, where can I find it?"

"It is not a pleasant ghost. You will not care for it."

"I was not planning to befriend it. I have other things in mind."

The landlord grew suspicious once more. Just who was this tramp with money in his purse who asked after a ghost? Would he bring the tavern into disrepute?

"What sort of things?" said the landlord.

"I shall tell you when you give me more information" said Blitt and he brought his purse out again, shaking it and swinging it about before the landlord's avaricious eyes.

"Very well" said the landlord, greedy fellow that he was, "we shall talk about it over dinner."

Oswyld Blitt washed himself and changed into another set of rags.

He dozed a while upon the bed and went downstairs for dinner as the clocks were striking eight. The dining chamber was a cheery room with walls of oaken wood and a carpet woven far away beyond the Sixteenth Sea. A mighty fire burned in a fireplace wrought of orange metal Oswyld Blitt had never seen before, the fire and a dozen tiny candles being all the light there was.

Oswyld ate alone, enjoying the taste of the wine, the smell of the glensesriots and the leathery feel of the elephant's ear. Presently, the landlord joined him with a large basket full of fresh fruit.

"A pear, sir?" said the landlord, "a twitterfruit, an apple, a nobbly tangerine?"

Blitt made an unpleasant face and began to gasp for breath.

"The tangerines!" he cried, "take them away! I cannot stand to be near the things!"

"I'm sorry, sir" replied the landlord, doing as the stranger bid. "Perhaps you would prefer some cheese."

"No thank you, landlord" replied Blitt, now recovered, "I have eaten my fill and excellent fare it was too, although the carrots were a little on the orange side. But you must tell me what you know about the ghost."

The landlord took a seat across the table from his guest and by the flickering light of the fire and the candles, began to recount his tale.

"A little way out from Gleg" he said, "upon the wilderness of Moorg, there stands a tower higher than any to be found in Gleg itself. This tower, they say, is no creation of the honest though eccentric dwarves who fathered Gleg. Rather it is older, the spawn of those who dwelt on Moorg in ages long since gone. I heard they had a city there, Dal Si Gott by name, though it perished many years ago. The tower alone remains.

"The tower, it is said, was their temple. They worshipped the stars and therefore sought to be among them when they prayed."

"The tower reaches up into the stars?" asked Oswyld Blitt, incredulous.

"So they say, so they say. Though no one within living memory has climbed as far as that, or even entered it at all."

"But on a clear night, surely you can see from outside how far it rises?"

The landlord shook his head.

"The night is never clear around the tower. Mists and fogs and dark black clouds wrap shrouds around it always and the top of it is never seen."

"What of the ghost?"

Here the landlord's eyes grew fearful and a number of his many chins began to shake.

"He is often seen upon the moor, clanking chains and shouting for paradise. "Paradise" he cries, "I was promised paradise. Where has she gone?" Fearful it is to hear. I know for I have heard it myself on stormy nights when the dogs begin to bark and the wind howls out for souls."

"Who is this ghost?"

"A priest of the worshippers of stars, so they say, wandering round his temple seeking comfort for his soul. I would ask you not to go there. There is danger in the tower."

"That may be" said Blitt, although he was disturbed by the trepidation of the landlord,

"However, I have no choice but to take the risk."

The landlord shook his head.

"It is not midwinter, sir. Neither is it stormy. The dogs are sleeping soundly and the wind has gone to trouble other men. If you would see the ghost tonight then you must venture into the tower itself."

"Then that is what I shall do."

The landlord's fear was superseded by his old suspicion.

"But why?" he asked the stranger, "what urges you to do this thing?"

"You have helped me well" replied Blitt, "I do indeed owe you an explanation. Very well, here it is."

"I have been a carpenter of great repute. In the town of Kluk-a-glaudden and the countries all around I was considered the very epitome of the craftsman. Noblemen and wealthy merchants ate and counted money on my tables. Great sleepers and lovers from everywhere clamoured for my beds. Many a hero's grandma rocked herself to sleep upon a rocking-chair of mine and the wooden temple of Plazzy stands upon the Rock of Savage Storms, a tribute to my hammer and saw. Once there came to me a message from the Emperor of Glorr himself, your fame and power and riches, the fine clothes, the rich food and the beautiful women I could buy: all this brought me nothing but unhappiness. So I gave them up. I sold my business and my craftsman's tools and wandered round the world in search of True Happiness. I sought it everywhere. I tried religions, mountain climbing, taught myself to dance, all the things I had not done before but nowhere did I find True Happiness."

"And then, in a place called Manth, I heard of a man who knew the secret of True Happiness. He lived in a cellar of a broken-down old building in the poorer part of town. I went to him. 'It is true' he said, 'that I have the secret of True Happiness but your money cannot buy it.' 'What must I do?' I asked him, 'that you would impart the secret unto me'."

Blitt produced a bottle from a pocket of his ragged jacket.

"He gave me this bottle. 'Find a ghost' he said, 'ensnare it in this bottle and bring it back to me. Then I shall tell you the secret of True Happiness.' 'But where shall I find a ghost?' I asked him. 'Search southerly' he said and so I came hence."

"A strange tale indeed" said the landlord, "What does he want with a ghost?"

Oswyld shrugged.

"This I asked him but he would not tell me. Who can understand the ways of those who know True Happiness?"

The landlord slowly shook his head.

"So now you can understand" said his guest, "why I have to go to the tower and look for the ghost."

"I would still urge you to reconsider."

"It is no good" said Blitt, "though I thank you for your kind concern. The moon is aloft I see. It's time for me to go."

Having been well rewarded for his trouble, the landlord led his guest unto the edge of the wilderness of Moorg and pointed in the direction of the tower of the star worshippers.

"Thither lies the tower" he said, "I wish you luck. It was nice knowing you."

"But I shall return directly I have snared the ghost."

The landlord said nothing but just walked away towards the city, sadly shaking his head.

Oswyld Blitt set out towards the tower.

He had not travelled far before the tower drew apart from the surrounding gloom and showed itself. It was just as the landlord had said. Far into the sky it stretched and clouds obscured the peak of it. All dark and shapeless things were these, enfolding veils of secrecy and whispering words of menace which were carried on the wind to howl and batter at some window on a stormy night. Oswyld Blitt heard not these words yet other warnings came to him. They came from the sky like the message of a hero who has ridden through the country of the enemy to save the day: the cries of the birds which fluttered warily around the tower. "Go away" they cried, "go away. We know what is in the tower for we can fly. Go away, go away!"

Blitt paid them little heed for the birds had neither knowledge nor need of True Happiness, flying as they did from breeze to breeze, alighting on a tree or chasing worms around the garden. Blitt continued on towards the tower still, a sense of chilly loneliness and desolation meeting him as he approached. The warnings of the birds gave way to mocking laughter, the clouds around the tower descending till they sat upon his head.

Alarmed by the closeness of the clouds, Blitt hurried over the last few feet to gain



the doubtful sanctuary of the tower itself. His path lay past a door of oaken wood which yawned noisily ajar then fell from its hinges at his touch, toppling to the floor with a crash that worried all that were awake in Gleg that night. Many fast asleep as well found sudden demons in their dreams and tried to stay awake for many nights thereafter lest they dream of them again.

Once inside the tower, Oswyld Blitt lit a candle he had brought along and found himself amongst the webs of many generations of spiders, whose descendants regarded him now through unpleasant eyes of orange, green and purple as they weaved their latest thread or feasted on some captive fly. Blitt could see a stairway leading upwards in the distance past the treacherous labyrinth of arachnid thread and he made towards this, threshing out a path amongst the snares of the spiders like a hunter in a strange and cluttered jungle.

At the foot of the stairs, he looked back upon the tiny entrance hall for fear his eyes had missed a sneaky ghost which might be hiding in a cranny. But nothing save the webs were there, except a single wooden table of less than mystic appearance which Blitt decided was unlikely to be haunted. He would have to ascend the stairs to seek his ghost.

The stairway climbed in a spiral with never a doorway or exit, neither were the walls troubled with windows. Oswyld felt a strange cold feeling around the crown of his head where the clouds without the tower had come to rest and as he went higher so this feeling sank until it had spread to his toes, his entire body growing strangely chill and shivery.

The webs became less frequent as he climbed and he wondered why the spiders should confine their activities to the lower storeys. Perhaps the strange coldness affected their hairy bodies in the same way it affected him. As the coldness grew, enthusiasm over his mission began to pale and only a constant repetition of the words True Happiness prevented him from turning around and hurrying back to Gleg.

For many hours he climbed and it was good that he was healthy for a leiser man might have despaired as he passed the twenty-thousandth step. Still no ornaments or furniture were apparent and he took the star-worshippers for a very sober, pious cult, having expected such

a mighty temple as this to be bedecked with finery and mystic oddities of many kinds. Still he climbed and if I should inscribe the word 'climb' a million times, I should still fail to convey the sternity for which it seemed to Oswyld that he walked upon the stairs. Then the musty dusty odour of the temple faded and it seemed some kind of freshness came upon the stairs. Looking up, Oswyld could see the light of a star which came shining from a distant altitude and he hurried his pace for it seemed that he might soon be at the head of the mighty staircase.

Altogether, Oswyld climbed for twenty-seven hours and fifteen minutes so that when he finally reached the top, tomorrow night was fast becoming yesterday.

It seemed that he had strayed beyond the world. The stairway alighted upon a platform which was formed among the stars. Mist obscured the ground but he could see the moon glistening in its cheesy way far below him along with some of the nearer stars and an occasional comet. Around him sang the distant stars, among them those which folk in Oswyld's day named Spangles, Lamp and The Red Rebel. Had his eyesight been good, he could perhaps have seen strange creatures which were peering out of other planets, including one who sought a ghost and stood upon a platform at the summit of a lofty tower.

But where was the ghost? Upon the platform there were strange instruments possessing dials and levers but no apparent purpose and there were cupboards through which Oswyld searched in a most unlawful manner. These contained colourful gowns and scrolls and old time-yellowed manuscripts but nowhere was there a sign of a ghost. Despair came upon Oswyld and he cried and wrang his hands and gnashed his teeth most terribly.

And then... the cold returning, icy fingers on the skin. A voice. A chant approaching, deep and mournful saying "paradise, where are you? paradise, where are you?", every syllable encroaching further on the pathway to despair. It came out of the sod of earth and the smell of decay spread around the platform, growing more unpleasant as the chant grew louder... "Paradise, where are you? Paradise, where are you?" A clanking of chains. A figure in white at the head of the stairway saying softly "Paradise" and sighing with the sadness of the grave.

Two black, snouldering eyes which had noticed eternity and found it desolate, looked upon life and found in it death, ogled an apple, found only the core.

"Paradise!" it cried through snowy, bloodless lips. "Paradise! Where are you, paradise?"

Blitt found himself unable to move for a while, his body frozen in a coldness which had blown upon the platform turning air to ice and hope into despair.

"What?" said the ghost, "do I percieve some creature which stumbles through the dust upon the floor of my wilderness? Shall I stamp on it and strike it dead?"

Oswyld Blitt took courage for it seemed that he must speak his piece or die.

"I can offer you paradise" he said.

"WHAT?" cried the ghost, in a voice like the siren of some strange ship which sails out of a storm to wreak evil. "What? Will their deieving tongues never be silent?"

"It is true" persisted Blitt, "I have brought it with me".

The poor white frame before him shook with sobs that told of infinite despair.

"Liar!" shrieked the spectre, "where are you feeble crawling creature? Allow my spirit to percieve you so that you may join me here and share despair."

"Wait!" cried Blitt, "this bottle!" and he pulled it from his pocket.

"A bottle?" said the ghost, "it seems I do remember such a thing, though as to it purpose..."

"Paradise" said Blitt, "is in the bottle."

"Indeed" said the ghost, scratching its chin, "I heard this claim once when I strayed into a town of apparent evil. Loud men proclaimed this fact in tuneless voices as they staggered through the streets back to their homes."

Blitt nodded.

"And I have the very bottle here" he whispered. "See, I set it on the ground."

The ghost stooped down to look upon the bottle, clanking his chains and moaning as he did so for this was a hard habit to break.

"I have tried everything else" he said, "I have little to loss."

"Go on" said Blitt, "climb into the bottle and then paradise is yours!"

The ghost looked deep into the eyes of Blitt.

"I percieve treachery in your eyes" he said.

An icy claw clutched at the heart of Blitt.

"And yet" the ghost continued, "I have a liking for the look of this bottle of yours."

"Paradise" Blitt whispered.

"Possibly" said the ghost, with all the scepticism of a lost soul, "just possibly..."

So saying, the ghost changed to liquid form and poured into the bottle.



Oswyld cried "Hurrah!" and jammed the cork into the bottle's neck. "True Happeenee!" he sang, "True Happeenee!"

Oswyld Blitt delayed not his journey in order to boast of his exploits in Gleeg but proceeded directly through the Pass of Shifting Shadows, into the Wood of Fearful Aspect across the Stream of Legion Sorrows, back into the boring town of Manth. There he located the shabby basement residence of the Guardian of the secret of True Happeenee.

"The bottle" cried Blitt, "I have a ghost within the bottle."

The Guardian of the secret of True Happiness looked up from the book he was reading, whose title I cannot divulge lest someone guess that very secret which he guarded.

"Ah" he said, "I see."

Excitedly, Blitt handed over the bottle.

The Guardian gripped the neck between his teeth and broke it off. Oblivious of broken glass, the Guardian stuck his hand inside.

"There is no ghost in the bottle" he said.

Oswyld Blitt did not believe his ears.

"Of course there is!" he cried, "I ensnared it myself. It is the ghost of a star-worshipper from the wilderness of Moorg."

"I'm sorry" said the Guardian of the secret of True Happeenee, "but there is only a note."

"Well...what does it say?"

"It is written in a strange tongue, yet I am not without an education. It says 'Thank you for showing me the way to paradise, yours sincerely, The Priest.'"

Oswyld shrieked and gnashed his teeth and snatched the bottle from the Guardian's hand.

"You spawn of demon!" he cried, "you have tricked me!"

The Guardian of the secret of True Happeenee merely smiled to himself and returned to his book.

For many hours did Blitt wander among the desolate streets of Manth, where everything was closed for the day was the sabbath. And then, as he rounded a corner and came upon a pile of broken bottles, a thought came into his head. What the ghost could do, so could he! Paradise could be his!

The neck of the bottle was broken but with a little care it could perhaps be entered without loss of life. If only he could become liquid like the ghost of the priest...or become SMALL!

And so did Oswyld Blitt become the wanderer again, inquiring everywhere for news of some magician with the power to make men small. He wandered in Glenestembourg where wizards make the sun grow dim and Itterwith where witches turn their enemies into toads. He climbed the mount of Loogenbloog where the Oracle of the Sun abides but he could only tell tomorrow



and was not concerned with little things at all.

He visited the giants of Blanth, the dwarves of Astan-gog-gath but no one had the power to make men small. Then he came upon the town of Swithenswuth and heard a rumour of a dwarf who lived alone outside the town walls beside an oak tree called 'The Tree'. This hermit was a sorcerer and had the power to make men small.

Oswyld Blitt repaired directly to The Tree and looked about him for the dwarf.

"I seek the dwarven sorcerer of Swithenswuth" he cried out loud, "who lives beside the tree men call 'The Tree'."

"What makee you think I'm a dwarf?" said a voice at his knee.

Oswyld Blitt looked down. There stood a short fat fellow with a red face and a long grey beard.

"Ah" said Blitt, "you must be the dwarven sorcerer himself."

"I'm NOT a dwarf!" exclaimed the sorcerer indignantly, "I am a wizard of great power and assume this shape to fool my enemies."

"I am not your enemy" said Blitt.

"That remains to be seen" replied the dwarf.

"I have merely come here to request that you make me small."

The dwarf's nose began to twitch with excitement and his beard began to curl up at the bottom.

"You want to be small!" he exclaimed, "you want to be small!?"

"Yee" Blitt replied, "I can pay you well for I have the remainder of my vast fortune all a-jangle in my pocket."

"There's no need to pay me" said the sorcerer, who was always willing to add to the number of people in the world who were even smaller than he was. "It will be a pleasure. But I'm afraid if you require the antidote, you will have to pay me heavily."

"I do not require the antidote. Now quickly, make me small."

The wizard scurried excitedly away and came back with a phial of pale pink liquid.

"Will it make me small enough to crawl into this bottle?" asked Blitt, producing his most treasured possession.

"Indeed" said the dwarf, "indeed."

Oswyld lay the bottle on its side upon the ground so that he might easily clamber into it. Then he took the phial from the dwarf and drank it down in one gulp.

"Good luck!" said the wizard.

And then Blitt was in a jungle; trees of grass towered all around him like the mighty towers of Gleege. The way to the bottle, though a matter of inches, was a long hard struggle for Blitt and he dreaded all the time that some giant worm or snail or ladybird would come to eat him up. Then the broken bottle lay before him. Being careful to avoid the jagged edges of the smashed neck, the tiny explorer managed to heave himself inside. Then the mite closed in around him.

There was something all about him which he loathed. He epluttered and gasped for air, crawling around in search of that which troubled him. Tangerinees!! The place was rife with them. They clung to trees which grew in rows and stretched up high into the firmament. No apple trees, not a pear or a banana. Not a bird nor a beast. Just trees with tangerinees.



Beside a nearby tree, the priest lay back and guzzled tangerines. He was no longer white but a dazzling shade of orange. He looked up at Oswyld and he waved.


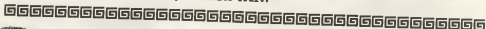
"Thank you" he said, "thank you."

"Tangerines!" gasped Blitt, "Aaaaaaargh! Tangerines!"


The priest looked astounded. He took another bite of his fruit.

"Don't you like tangerines?" he asked, the juice and pipe all dribbling down his chin,

"I must confess, they are my very favourite fruit."



Are you keen on
Horror stories &
the Fantastic in
Literature, Art &
Films? If so the
BFS is for you!
Services include,
a Library, a reg-
ular Magazines &
Bulletin, a Fan-
zine Library and
a system of crit-
ical comment for
all the budding
writers amongst
you.



If interested,
the address to
write to is:
Brian Moonay,
447A Portere Av.
Dagenham, Essex,
RM9 4ND.
Subscription for
the year: £1.50.
For a prompt
reply send a
SAE to the
above address.



BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY



THEY WHO OPPOSE CHAOS

BY *Adrian Cole*

A survey of the Heroic Fantasy field.

PART THREE: Related, Fragmentary and New Heroes.

Perhaps the most difficult facet of fantasy for a writer to achieve and then to maintain in his work is originality, particularly now that certain basic syndromes seem to have been exhausted. One of the most original creations in the genre is Jack Vance's extraordinary *Dying Earth*, around which the author has woven an intriguing and spell-binding series of sparkling stories. In *DYING EARTH* (Lancer 1950) we are introduced to Earth as it has become countless eons in the future, in a remote era when sorcery rules and life forms have taken on peculiar and formidable appearances. As the sun is fading, Earth's last races are spread out randomly in splinter cultures where science has decayed almost to the point of extinction. Vance's most arresting character in this twilight world is Cugel the Clever, a rogue intent on securing a fortune during his random wanderings and in *EYES OF THE OVERWORLD* (Ace 1966) he entangles himself with the wizardly old sorcerer, Luconnu, for whom he is obliged to set off in search of the fabled 'Eyes' which allow the bearer the mysterious gift of being able to see into the enigmatic realm of the 'Overworld'. Cugel's quest takes him to various incredible settings, and Vance's quick-witted, humorous style adds to the enjoyment and compelling inventiveness of the saga. The twist at the end of the book (which I refrain from revealing here) is beautifully handled and is typical of the daily life of this strangest of environments.

For a writer of even Vance's staggering inventiveness, it would have been very difficult to sustain the flow of brilliant ideas inherent in the *Dying Earth* cycle, and for a new writer to attempt a sequel to the remarkable books seems on the face of it, doubly daunting. However, with Vance's apparent permission, Michael Shea has written *A QUEST FOR SIMBILIS* (Daw 1974) which not only enhances the career of the cunning Cugel, but also adds new and sparkling dimensions to the earlier works. Taking over from that hilarious ending in *OVERWORLD*, Shea leads a bemused Cugel on yet another bizarre quest, this time ultimately to the fabled sorcerer Simbilis, alleged to be the greatest of legendary sorcerers the world has known. Shea embroils Cugel and his weird companions in a sequence of original and highly amusing escapades - and in the company of some memorable characters - achieving this with all the colour and vivaciousness of the original creator. The confrontation with Simbilis is particularly breathtaking, consolidating *Dying Earth's* already vast reputation as an outstanding work. Vance has yet to publish a new *Dying Earth* novel, although he has written two short stories outside the three above-mentioned - the first was *Morreign* (*FLASHING SWORDS*, edited by Lin Carter, Dell 1974) and the other is *The Seventeen Virgins* (*YEARS BEST FANTASY*, edited by Carter, Daw 1975). The first sees a distinct departure from setting and outlook for the series as we are taken, with a gaggle of magicians, on an intergalactic voyage, while the latter brings us back to more familiar terrain and yet a new dilemma for the wily Cugel, who tampers with the virgins and draws upon himself a grim predicament.

John Brunner, evidently influenced at some time in his remarkable and prolific career by Vance's books, has written *CATCH A FALLING STAR* (Ace 1968) which is so like *Dying Earth* in setting, mood and inventiveness that one could easily believe it is part of that earlier cycle. The hero, Creohan, discovers a new star in the heavens, and thinking that it will cause havoc on Earth during its passing, sets out on a Cugel-like quest for help in thwarting it. He encounters splinter societies not unlike Vance's and extricates himself from equally forbidding situations. Here is one pastiche any fan can be glad of discovering.

The concept of Earth in its last days is also the subject of *ZOTHIQUE* (Ballantine 1970)

a collection of dazzling stories by Clark Ashton Smith, representing for my money the cream of his fabulous output. Zothique, the last continent of Earth, abounds in dead cities and evil Gode, sorcerers and demons, vampires and elementals, and Smith evokes a very real and utterly disturbing world of nightmare. The 'flavour of decay' and death has never been quite so effectively handled in fantasy, and Smith's terrifying pictures of corruption and gathering gloom present a starkly haunting landscape, fascinating and enchanting. In his other Ballantine collections, notably HYPERBOREA and POSEIDONIS, Smith again brings into play his masterly imagery, though the evil-riddled world of Zothique remains his glittering masterwork. Lin Carter has effectively embellished some fragmentary Smith pieces, which were first published in the revived but short-lived WEIRD TALES.

On the topic of remote Earths, a mention must be made of Van Vogt's intriguing BOOK OF PIATH (Paperback Lib. 1964) which is basically SF, but has many delightful fantasy elements. This book provided an inspiration for Lin Carter's excellent GIANT OF WORLD'S END (Belmont 1969) in which Ganelon Silvermane sets out to thwart the falling moon. Certainly it is well above Carter's average performance, and the series has been extended by Daw with WARRIOR and ENCHANTRESS (both set chronologically before GIANT). Inventive and imaginative, although some of Carter's proper names are dreadful lapses.

Although Sprague de Camp is probably best known in fantasy for his work on the reconstruction of Conan's career, he has also written some memorable sword and sorcery and fantasy works of his own distinctive, chucklesome brand. His own Poseidonis, the 'last foundering isle of Atlantis', bears some similarity to Smith's, though the amusing style of the stories does not. In THE TRITONIAN RING (Paperback Lib. 1968) we meet Prince Vaker, a brawny hero, who is far more human than many of his S&S contemporaries, and who battles sorcery and murderous enemies effectively and often unconventionally on his quest across the world of his day. De Camp has written a handful of short stories set in the same era (known as the Pusanian stories) my own favourite of which is the rib-tickling Eye of Tandyle (THE MAGIC OF ATLANTIS, edited by Lin Carter, Lancer 1970) which involves typical skullduggery and pilfering with little reward. For a comprehensive article on de Camp's Pusan tales, I recommend AMRA 63, the article by John Boardman and the beautiful centre page spread map by Robert Hawley. De Camp has written other books in the same jocular vein, notably the two Jorian books, THE COBLIN TOWER (Pyramid 1968) and THE CLOCKS OF IRAZ (Pyramid 1971) which are not quite as original and as amusing as the former saga, though they have ample buffoonery and sorcery gone amiss to sustain attention. And for further chuckles there is THE FALLIBLE FIEND (Signet 1973) which concerns Zdim, a totally inept demon who proves incapable of managing the most mundane of his various masters' affairs, and indeed, who eats his first master due to a misunderstanding.

Another Atlantean hero who has had a fragmentary career is Elak, creation of Henry Kuttner. Although there are only four Elak adventures, they are liberally dosed with Sword and Sorcery and fast action. Three have been anthologised since their original appearances. The first is Thunder in the Dawn (WARLOCKS AND WARRIORS, edited by de Camp, Berkeley 1971) in which the exiled Elak battles warlocks and Vikings to save his city Cyrenia. Next comes

Spawn of Dagon (THE MAGIC OF ATLANTIS, ibid) a shorter tale of sorcery and eldritch Gods, followed by Beyond the Phoenix (WEIRD TALES, Nov. 1938) in which Elak battles a Lovecraft-type God and crosses other dimensions. Lastly there is Dragon Moon (MIGHTY BARBARIANS, edited by Santesson, Lancer 1969) in which Elak struggles a la Conan for survival against fierce opposition. Kuttner also wrote two excellent short stories about another wandering hero, Prince Raynor the Damned, from the lost Gobi area, the first being Cursed be the City (YOUNG MAGICIANS, edited by Carter, Ballantine 1969) and the sequel Citadel of Darkness (SWORD & SORcery, edited by de Camp, Pyramid 1963) which has Raynor in conflict with a powerful wizard, a yarn with intriguing astrological connotations. Of the six tales,



the Raynor ones have the edge, but it would be nice to see all six collected in a single volume.

C. L. Moore produced *Sword & Sorcery* of an even finer quality than her more famous husband. *JIREL OF JOIRY* (Paperback Lib. 1969) was a collection of marvellous, dazzling stories about Jirel, a warrior woman who would have been fit to stand beside Howard's Red Sonja, and who is at least more chic. Jirel is a fighting tigress whose own world is rife with wizards and strange beings. In the best of the stories, *Black God's Kiss*, Jirel goes deep down into the bowels of her world to enter a nightmare realm the equal of any in S&S, and she takes back from it the accursed kiss of a black god which destroys her enemy on the surface. Another brilliant C. L. Moore character is Northwest Smith, a wandering space-man who finds on the distinctly Barsoom-flavoured Mars and Venus of his time a variety of fascinating opponents, steeped in sorcery and magical abandon. *Shamblau* is one of the best short stories in the entire fantasy field, a tale in which the redoubtable Smith encounters a sorceress whose hair comes revoltingly alive and seeks to feed on his flesh - shades of Medusa.

Akin to Smith is Leigh Brackett's intriguing hero, Eric John Stark, a man born on an Erbianian-type Mercury, and who travels worlds that parallel those of John Carter's creator. Stark first appeared in the old *PLANET* magazine, but has since enjoyed a healthy revival - in *SECRET OF SINHARAT* and *PEOPLE OF THE TALISMAN* (Ace Double 1964) and now in a current new series, the first of which was *THE GINGER STAR* (Ballantine 1974). In this Stark travels to a distant world in search of the man who once treated him like a son, and on Skait Stark encounters sinister cults and archaic practices, forcing him to set himself up against the evil rulers. *HOUNDS OF SKAITH* (1974) continues the saga, which is beautifully written and full of new ideas. Stark also appears in *THE HALFLING* (Ace 1973) a collection of unrelated stories, both fantasy and SF based.

Two short books by Ursula LeGuin are similar in mood, style and setting to the Northwest Smith and Eric John Stark sagas. These are *ROCANNON'S WORLD* and *PLANET OF EXILE* (both Tandem 1972) and although not as sparkling as the Earthsea books, the two have suitable touches of the LeGuin magic and enchantment.

One of the biggest giants in the fantasy genre is Poul Anderson, whose *BROKEN SWORD* (Sphere 1973) is one of the most poignant and moving books written in the fantasy vein. It tells of the feud between Skafloc and his half-brother Valgard, and of the Elves and the Trolls, and of the unwitting love of Skafloc for his sister, Freda (the concept which inspired Eric's love for his sister, Cymoril). The book is full of excitement, adventure and sadness, rich in ideas and the flavour of mythology. *THREE HEARTS AND THREE LIONS* (Avon 1962) is no less recommended, dealing with a bizarre quest in a magical realm in which prominent mythological figures are embroiled in the quest and in which the hero goes deep underground into a troll's lair - terrifying stuff. More recently Anderson has written *A MIDSUMMER'S TEMPEST* (Ballantine 1975) a completely original yarn in which Shakespeare is a historian from the past, so that all that he wrote is historical fact, and the hero, Prince Rupert of the Rhine flees from the Puritans in a fantasy realm where steam locomotives have been discovered prematurely, and whose aide later in the book are Ariel and the repentant Caliban! Stunning reading, bursting with unique ingredients.

A newer giant is Thomas Burnett Swann, who writes evocatively of the pre-dawn of history as we know it, setting most of his exceptional stories in ancient Greece and Italy. He weaves remarkable tales around the fauns, satyrs, nymphs and wonderful beings of that golden period, his poetic style full of charm and warmth. There are now eleven books by Swann, my own personal favourite being *MOONDUST* (Ace 1968) which peeps into the legend of Jericho, and *WOLFWINTER* (Ballantine 1972) which relates the tragic love affair of a girl and a satyr. Swann's magic and totally original, with characters that step out of the pages vividly.

For a dash of humour aside from the de Camp repertoires, Robert Lory's side-splitting *MASTER OF THE ETRAI* (Dell 1970) remains my favourite. Here we meet the nervous, punitive, one-legged Hamper, who is sent away from Castle Bolek by witless seniors on a wild goose chase, and whose lunatic adventures are sure to bring a laugh to the hardiest of critics - and I doubt if there is a more uproarious ending to a S&S yarn anywhere. This one is pure gold! Also breaking from traditional, chivalrous heroics is Andrew Offutt's amusing *ARDOR ON AROS* (Dell 1973), a satirical swipe at Barsoom in which nubile young women are apt to be raped and the code and morale of the S&S warrior are turned upside down. Also in a light-hearted vein is John Jakes' laudable *MENTION MY NAME IN ATLANTIS* (Daw 1972) - laud-

able for its efforts at spoofing Conan. Conan the Chimerical blunders through witlessly and provides many a belly laugh, but the alien invaders (offworlders) seem incongruous. And lastly a mention for KANDAR (Paperback Lib. '69) the lovable creation of Ken Bulmer, a competent but by no means unbeatable hero who batters his way through against some nasty villains, bearing in his head the voices of two others he has killed, one a ruffian, the other more diminutive.

There are, of course, new heroes making their presence felt from time to time, some of whom seem destined for enterprising careers, others more likely to fall by the wayside. Particularly outstanding is Kane, the Mystic Swordsman, the creation of Karl Edward Wagner, a new and potentially vast talent. Kane is the Biblical Cain, doomed by his God to wander endlessly for his crime against his brother, and his saga has a setting in the future of the world after a retrogression to barbarism. Kane first appeared in a little-known, virtually ignored work called DARKNESS WEAVES (Powell Sci-Fi 1970) which is in the process of being serialised in the superb magazine devoted to Wagner, MIDNIGHT SUN. In his bizarre world, Kane encounters supernatural beings as well as traditional S&S antagonists, Wagner successfully blending horror into his work in a way which lends exciting originality, and his style is particularly potent. In DEATH ANGEL'S SHADOW (Warner 1973), Kane encounters werewolves, vampires and devilry in general, his unique character blazing through the action, and in the recent BLOODSTONE (Warner 1975) Kane is consolidated into one of the heroes to watch for, the novel being a real feast of S&S and an absolute must for aficionados of the genre.

Roland Green's Wandor has made two appearances to date, and after an indifferent debut, appears to be embellishing his reputation with forays into action and excitement that bode interesting sequels. WANDOR'S RIDE (Avon 1974) I found fairly mundane, although sorcery and action are in evidence, if lacking in originality. Set on a parallel world, medieval in outlook, it concerns Wandor's search for the relics that will make him High King. WANDOR'S JOURNEY (Avon 1975) is much better, the battle scenes more gripping and less predictable, and the various characters are beginning to brighten their hues.

HADON OF ANCIENT OPAR (Daw 1974) is a strange mixture of excitement and old hat from Philip Jose Farmer (creator of the spectacular Tieri World quartet). Opar - which first came to light in RETURN OF TARZAN - was built in remote prehistory by Atlantean colonists, and Farmer has had permission to set the Hadon stories way back when before the place fell into ruins and became overrun by the bestial throwbacks of Tarzan's day. Hadon is a tough warrior who has to prove himself worthy of his place by excelling at the huge games festival (which he does, though in an interesting and fast-paced section of the book) and who then begins attempting to win for himself the revered throne. Tarzan is here somewhere, too, his shadow slipping elusively through the background, ready to leap out in some subsequent Hadon yarn. Very promising stuff.

Less promising was the debut of a new Gardner Fox hero, KYRIC, WARLOCK WARRIOR (Gold Medal 1975). Kyric, moulded in the same press as Kothar, but with a pinch of flavouring, comes up against some relatively stock situations and demons, but Fox merits credit for not labouring the point in that he carries everything along at the usual breakneck speed. There will be more of Kyric, a new book, KYRIC FIGHTS THE DEMON WORLD, is due shortly. Michael Resnick appears to have written off his hero, Adam Thane, who fights his way through two Erb pastiches on Ganymede - GODDESS OF GANYMEDE and PURSUIT ON GANYMEDE (both Paperback Lib. 1968) both of which add nothing to the original, but belt along at a fair pace - certainly an improvement on Gardner Fox's two Llarn books, which were more carbon Erb, WARRIOR OF LLARN (Ace 1964) and its sequel, THEIF OF LLARN (Ace 1966). Hero Alan Morgan appears to have gone the way of all pastiche. One heroic figure who we will sadly see no more is Kavin, created by David Mason, a fine writer of fantasy who regrettably died recently. KAVIN'S WORLD (Lancer 1969) was full of incident and novelty, pitting Kavin against strange adversaries well away from the run-of-the-mill horde. The follow-up, RETURN OF KAVIN (Lancer 1972) was also a treat, as Mason had a distinctive style and brand of his own, endorsed in the

excellent independent novel SORCEROR'S SKULL (Lancer 1970) which has a marvellous, sorcerous climax.

There are individual books in the genre that deserve recommendation - in spite of my salvoes at Lin Carter's pastiche work, I would give MAN WHO LOVED MARS (Fawcett 1973) a very high ranking; this is an evocative novel with a touching theme concerning a spacer who discovers on Mars a lost city wherein lies the key to the planet's salvation. John Jakes has written a stirring S&S yarn in THE LAST MAGICIANS (Signet 1969) a rare but desirable story of Cham Helleyes, who battles the horrors of the Unborn. If ever a hero deserves an encore it must surely be John Brunner's Mazda, THE TRAVELLER IN BLACK (Ace '69) who combats the waywardness of a cosmos ruled by Chaos in a unique sequence of stories. Another outstanding novel, which is probably SF as much as fantasy is Fritz Leiber's gripping GATHER, DARKNESS (Berkley 1950) in which Earth has returned to the Dark Ages and where witchcraft has become the dominant religion. Fortunately the brilliant story has been reissued of late by Ballantine. For a remarkable duet in the fantasy field for younger readers, Alan Garner's magical WEIRDSTONE OF BRISINGAMEN and MOON OF GOMRATH (both Armada 1974) are worthy items on any collectors shelf, blending Norse and Celtic mythology in a rare and thought-provoking way, achieving an atmosphere of especial enchantment.

Thus ends this brief survey of the fantasy field - a survey which I appreciate will have excluded titles which may be highly thought of by fellow readers of the genre, and for the absence of which I take this opportunity of apologising - the exclusion of any further noteworthy heroes is more by accident than by design. As a compromise, therefore, I append the following list of titles which will be of interest to the hardy fan.

APPENDIX.

Adams (Robert)	THE COMING OF THE HORSECLANS *	Pinnacle (1975)
Bradley (Marion Zimmer)	THE DARKOVER Books	Ace and Daw
Broderick (Damien)	SORCEROR'S WORLD	Signet (1970)
Bulmer (Ken)	WORDS OF THE BARBARIANS *	NEL (1970)
Cory (Howard)	THE SWORD OF LANKOR	Ace (1966)
Cummings (Ray)	TAMA OF THE LIGHT COUNTRY	Ace (1965)
	TAMA, PRINCESS OF MERCURY	Ace (1966)
Dain (Alex)	BANE OF KANTHOS *	Ace (1969)
Davidson (Avram)	THE PHOENIX AND THE MIRROR *	Mayflower (1975)
	THE ISLAND UNDER THE EARTH *	Mayflower (1975)
	URSUS OF ULTIMA THULE	Avon (1973)
Jorgensen (Ivor)	WHOM THE GODS WOULD DESTROY	Five Star (1968)
Kline (Otis Adelbert)	The Martian, Venusian, Moon and jungle pastiches (Erb) *	Ace
Lord (Jeffrey)	The RICHARD BLADE series	Pinnacle
Majors (Simon) (G.F. FOX)	THE DRUID STONE *	NEL (1970)
Meade (Richard)	SWORD OF MORNINGSIDES *	Signet (1968)
	EXILE'S QUEST	Signet (1970)
Moorcock (Michael)	The Martian/Erub trilogy	NEL (1971)
Munn (H. Warner)	THE KING OF THE WORLD'S EDGE *	Ace (1966)
	THE SHIP FROM ATLANTIS	Ace (1967)
	MERLIN'S RING	Ballantine (1974)
Myers (John Myers)	SILVERLOCK *	Ace (1966)
Offutt (Andrew)	MESSENGER OF ZHUVASTOU *	Berkley (1973)
Page (Norvell)	FLAME WINDS	Berkley (1967)
	SONS OF THE BEAR GOD	Berkley (1967)
Reade (Quinn)	QUEST OF THE DARK LADY *	Belmont (1969)
Smith (George Henry)	WITCH QUEEN OF LOCHLANN *	Signet (1969)
Williams (Robert Moore)	THE JONGOR Books	Popular Lib. (1970)

(Those titles marked with an asterisk are worthy of a read, the others, in my opinion, are for the collector only. AC.)



Ultra- mapide

An aqua-green child queen
dips in a rock pool
slimy with seaweed. A whole world
curls at her fingertips, shrinking
from the brittle salt surface
to the darkening depths. She kisses
freedom, leaning to tease strange creatures
with the blood burning in her lip. Here
is her sea, waiting to be conquered.

At evening a hand touches
her sandsoft hair, saying come,
and holding her sunbrowned gown.
The breeze begins to blow.

Gaynor Chapman



The way down was hidden by a deep gloom through which he could barely see the figure of the old man, beside him, leaning on his stick and shuffling awkwardly downwards from step to step. The old man's breath came and went in wheezes and pants.

They were descending a spiral stairway, the stone treads curving away out of sight - what little light there was in the gloom - above and below them. This stairway was bounded on either side by walls of great stone blocks. They went down in silence until the gloom began to give way to a grey light, and the endless curl of the stairway suddenly revealed to them a window. The old man immediately shuffled across to the window, put his head out - which it was just large enough to allow - and looked down.

After a time he withdrew his head and gazed thoughtfully at the younger man, turning his back on the window through which came a vague blur of sounds from somewhere below. The younger man thought he heard screams and what might have been the clash of weapons.

"Still killing each other down there," said the old man.

"Who?"

"Oh, nobody in particular. Just people. Why are they fighting, d'you suppose?"

The younger man shrugged and turned away from that thoughtful gaze. "Injustices committed against one side or the other, perhaps, or some quarrel. Does it matter?"

"No; if you're not interested we can go on down."

The old man began to shuffle downwards again, from step to step.

After a time he said, "What are you going down for?"

"To get out."

"Out?"

"Out of this tower; I can't stay trapped in here forever. It's so constricting."

"They say," said the old man wisely, "that there's another way out at the top."

"But it's farther; and harder to go up than down."

"Yes, of course; if you say so."

The light of the window had faded above them now, and they were moving in gloom again. The younger man stretched out a hand and ran it along the wall to steady himself.

"If that wall wasn't there," said the old man, "you'd have nothing to steady yourself against. And if the steps weren't under you, you'd fall."

The younger man was hardly listening; he was concentrating on the prospect of freedom. "How far is it?"

"Oh, it won't take long. And it's easy as you're going down."
The man coughed dryly, tired. He paused a moment to draw a deep breath, and then started out again.

"Why d'you want to get out?" he said.

"Why? I can't stay in here!"

"Why not?"

The younger man stared in surprise at what little he could see of the figure beside him.

"I've got to have freedom! I can't bear it."

"No, I suppose not. They say that if you go up it gets narrower and narrower towards the top —"

"Ugh!"

"— but then I suppose it feels better when you get out."

The younger man jeered. "Don't be stupid, you old goat."

The old man lapsed into silence. He leant heavily on his stick and breathed hard. After a time the darkness began to fold back, layer by layer, from beneath them, giving way to the same grey light as before. Soon they came to another window, smaller than the first, throwing an image of itself in light on the opposite wall. The younger man could now see that the stairway had become noticeably wider.

This time the old man could not get his head out of the window.

"They're still fighting," he said, craning his neck and peering. "All of them fighting."

"What does it matter?"

"Nothing at all; not if you don't think so."

"Well, then."

"They're fighting for their freedom, you know."

"Freedom," said the younger man as they sat out downwards again, "is a fine thing to fight for. A place without constraint, without laws to hold people in; that's something worth killing for. No fences, no rules, no walls. I'm glad that they're fighting."

The light of the window faded behind them with remarkable speed, but despite that the younger man could sense the walls of the curling stairway drawing farther apart as they went down.

"I can offer you a bargain," panted the old man.

"What bargain?"

"This is it: instead of going down this way, you can go up; and it'll get narrower and narrower the nearer you get to the top, and steeper and steeper; and perhaps the doorway'll be too small when you do get there; and of course now you've come down this far it'll be farther to go than it was."

The younger man laughed derisively. "Is that it?"

"Take it or leave it."

"But that's no bargain at all."

"No, I suppose not," said the old man wearily.

"And I'm nearer the bottom now, anyway."

"That's right — almost there. You're right, of course."

"Look: we're coming to another window."

"Yes, it's the last one. We're almost there now."

The darkness was peeling away again to reveal that the stairway was wider than ever here, and the steps were shallow and easy. The window was even smaller than the last one; the old man hobbled over at once, but no matter how he craned and peered he could see nothing this time. He listened.

"I can hear them," he said. "Still fighting."

"Come on," said the younger man impatiently.

"Yes, of course." The old man reluctantly left the window and down they went again, the old man wheezing in an unhealthy manner. "You know," he said after a time, "they're fighting because of you."

"Me?" The younger man was almost certain now that the old man was mad, albeit harmless enough.

"All that talk about freedom," said the old man. "You incited them."

"They're giving their lives to a fine cause."

"But couldn't you just keep quiet so they could stop?"

"No. You see, that would be imposing a restriction on myself; I wouldn't impose that kind of restriction on anyone. Each individual has the right to do exactly as he likes."

"Of course," wheezed the old man. "I see now."

"Why are you panting so much? It's easy now."

"I'm going up, not down," gasped the insane old man. "That's why I'm so old, you see:

I've been climbing for years."

In the gloom the younger man shook his head and smiled.

But the gloom was fading again. The light was not grey now, but slightly yellowed.

"Is this another window?" said the younger man.

"Oh, no," said the old man with difficulty. "We're there now." He was manipulating his stick and hobbling along frantically.

"The way out?"

"Yes. Out there is what you want - each individual doing precisely what pleases him, with no restriction. Are you sure you won't except my offer?"

The younger man merely laughed at him. When he looked again his companion was gone. He shrugged and hurried down the last of the steps.

The stairway ended in a flagged space, broad and high, filled with the yellowish light, the source of which the younger man could not see; it seemed to emanate from the stones themselves. Down the walls ran traces of moisture, and they were old and crumbling. On the other side of the space stood a great door of darkened wood which seemed to turn slightly green in places as if there was mould upon it. The younger man thought how different this was from the door at the top, reputedly so small that some could not get through it at all after all their climbing.

There was a slightly foul smell about the place, but of course it was the way out and far better than labouring all the way back up the steps. The younger man did not bother to read the word carved roughly above the door, which said simply 'Hell', but instead hurried across to the door and pushed it. It swung open easily to his touch and he stepped through.

The door slammed behind him.

Paradox: The Worlds Of M. C. Escher *by David Sutton*

(This is a revised version of an article that appeared in
ARC, fantasy arts magazine, issue 2 August 1971, editor:
Andy Northern.)

Unlike many other contemporary fantasy artists, Maurits C. Escher (1898-1972) has been largely ignored by devotees of the genre and by lovers of art generally. In fact, those who most appreciate Escher are scientists and mathematicians from all over the world, many of whom display his prints on their walls. J. L. Locher, writing in the introduction to *THE WORLD OF M. C. ESCHER*, says in part, "In the traditional art world, Escher's work has always been regarded with a certain reserve, and he has never been highly esteemed. Respect has been paid the mastery of graphic techniques and the great originality shown in his prints, but otherwise his work is considered to be too intellectual and to lack a lyrical quality."

Why Escher should remain in this state, leaving the spotlight on the Dali's and Bosch's of this world is a mystery. Perhaps it is because he was more concerned with repetition, issuing his prints in limited editions, rather than producing an original; or perhaps it is because science is more readily aware of his cosmicism than art. But his lithographs and woodcuts are more than flawless productions - they are essentially statements about the nature of space. In one creation Escher can terrorise us and also make us laugh at the absurdity of our misconceptions about our spatial existence.

It should be noted that now Escher's work is being given an airing through the medium of well produced art books and reproductions of his work in various forms, such as wall posters, record sleeves and as book illustrations such as Carl Sagan's recent treatise on life in the Universe, *THE COSMIC CONNECTION*.

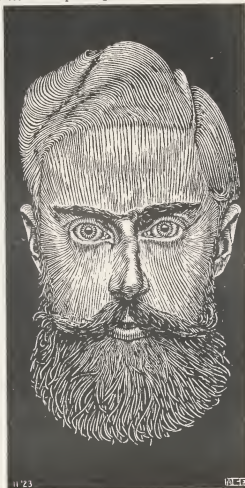
Escher's work ranges from the normal to things that are so absurd that at first glance one could miss what he does with three-dimensional space in a two-dimensional medium. For me personally, it is his story pictures, unlimited spaces, spatial rings, inversions, relativities and impossible buildings that intrigue me the most, being as they are in the realms of the weird and fantastic: 'The artist's technical mastery is unmistakable, making his most imaginative subjects convincing - sometimes frighteningly so. That his imagination is, to say the least, eccentric cannot be denied; his work is at once surrealist, representational and macabre. Escher is mathematician, photographer, architect and visionary. He is all those things and more: an artist.' So runs the blurb to his book, *THE GRAPHIC WORK OF M. C. ESCHER*. Martin Gardner in an article on the artist in *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN* says: 'His lithographs, wood-engravings and mezzotints can be found hanging on the walls of mathematicians and scientists in all parts of the world. There is an eerie, surrealist aspect to some of his work, but his pictures are less the dreamlike fantasies of a Salvador Dali or a Rene Magritte than they are subtle philosophical and mathematical observations intended to evoke what the poet Howard Nemerov writing about Escher, called the 'mystery, absurdity, and sometimes terror' of the world.'

It is true that, unlike the work of other fantasy artists (whatever medium they work in) who cram their paintings with visions of incredible cacophony and horror, Escher prefers to

distort the recognisable in subtle creations that render the viewer not only perplexed, but also uplifted beyond the puny three dimensions we are trapped in. His impossible angles are almost worthy of Lovecraft's terror-drenched angles into time and space. Lovecraft described impossibilities, Escher drew them. The effect is disturbing. Nowhere do we find Escher forcing the macabre, the eerie - these elements simply exist within the particular idea he is expressing, as though the paradoxical were the normal, and his work has all the more power because of this half-smile at our expense.

The people who inhabit his lithographs are caught up in a world of ritual madness. His faceless figures walk about their business, each individual safe in his own world, yet each defying the laws which exist in ours. In Escher's story pictures are examples of three dimensional life gaining or losing their spatial existence. In *Cycle*, a pleasant fellow gaily dances down the steps from his house, as he does so losing his reality until at the bottom of the picture he becomes a conglomeration of interlocking shapes. On the left of the picture one has the impression that the shapes evolve upwards, finally emerging as the man's house, thus the cycle is made. It is immediately realized that however much we would want otherwise, this happy fellow is forever caught up in a nightmare of terror where history repeats itself over and over and he cannot escape his fate.

Cubic Space Division, in Escher's 'Unlimited Spaces' series, is an infinity of girders intersecting one another at right angles. Looking into this picture, the essence of infinity is conveyed very eloquently as well as the feeling of immense height. *Three Worlds* shows a sea of







this domain go unhurried and unafraid about their daily tasks, oblivious of the conflicting forces about them. Significantly, the figures are faceless, and thus blind, and logically, being unable to see their fellow men and their surroundings, are quite happy with the situation! Two of the figures occupy one staircase, one is ascending, the other descending, yet they are both going in the same direction!

Escher's visual paradoxes are further developed in his lithographs of buildings which, at first glance, appear quite normal. On closer inspection, however, their distortion of what we know and accept as possible is revealed. His most simple construction is Ascending and Descending, but like all his work, it is an architect's and a mathematician's nightmare; and more, our own! This one shows a large building with an inner courtyard, which is roofed by a stairway. Two rows of monks, one inner, one outer, walk up an down respectively; yet they are eventually neither going up nor down since they always arrive at the same place. We have a dislocation in space here and a dislocation in time, for these poor creatures are going nowhere and taking no measurable time to do it!

The art of M. C. Escher is truly amazing and ignoring his grasp of technique, one is still aware of his cosmic perspective, shown most strongly in his later work when technique took second place to ideas and concepts. This is not to say that his ability faltered; no, he had in fact perfected it and his interests expanded to the breathlessness of infinity and those cosmic jokers who at one turn place us in a three-dimensional prison and then release part of our mind to enable us to grasp the vast, paradoxical Universe in which we live. Escher says of himself, '... it can apparently happen that someone, without much exact learning and with little of the information collected by earlier generations in his head, that such an individual, passing his days like other artists in the creation of more or less fantastic pictures, can one day feel ripen in himself a conscious wish to use his imaginary images to approach infinity as purely and as closely as possible.' (Approaches into Infinity, from THE WORLD OF M. C. ESCHER). That Escher aspired to and achieved such a noble purpose is the gain of all who wish to appreciate vistas beyond the mundane and who realise that to trip out of one's earthly limits is to reach the knowledge that we, the Earth, and the Universe are one.

References: THE GRAPHIC WORK OF M. C. ESCHER (Oldbourne Press Ltd, 1961. Contains 76 reproductions of the artist's work, some in colour, with a classification and description of the prints by Escher.

leaves resting on the surface of a still lake. Under these in the dark lurks a bloated, evil-looking fish. Reflected in the water are some trees. These three subjects each suggest a still pond or lake, yet the water itself is not depicted and is not in any way apparent otherwise. Eye is a detailed study of a human eye whose dark, hollow pupil reflects a skull symbolising death, 'one who watches us all' as the artist puts it.

Going on to the 'Relativities' and 'Impossible Buildings' one finds the worlds of the outright bizarre and the frightening; a world that Escher has made uniquely his own. In Relativity, three forces of gravity are exerted inside an insane building where walls, floors and ceilings have no relationship with one another. The figures who inhabit





This book has recently been republished in paperback by Pan/Ballantine in their Fantastic Art series). THE WORLD OF M. C. ESCHER (Harry N. Abrams Publishers, distributed by New American Library, 1974. Contains 184 reproductions, some in colour, with an introduction and biography by J. L. Locher and Approaches to Infinity by Escher). Mathematical Games by Martin Gardner (article in SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN for April 1966). Expressing the Abstract by Charles Platt (article in NEW WORLDS for July 1967).

Articles Copyright (c) 1971, 1975, David Sutton.



THE DALLAZUEL RIFT

by John Hurley

Before them was a mass of crumbled stones that once was a lofty cliff that had crashed to the truth of time and was now a shapeless phantom without saga, an obstacle to foot and vision. Pressing at its ribs were its haughty brothers, tall peaks that still held their origins.

The party stopped its trek and viewed the tumbled stack of debris. There were six of them, clad in the tight but pliable uniforms of their service. Their leader Ayon spoke: "You, Upel, scout that rim and see what's beyond." The young Upel smiled and began climbing the loose piled pyramid. The others stood observing him, comfortable in the warm sunlight that was upon their backs.

Upel reached the crest and standing stared over, then he turned and beckoned with his arm. The rest, save for Ayon looked at each other begrudging to attempt such a climb, but Ayon led and they followed. Up they climbed, the hard deep green of their shells glistening colourfully with perspiration, their legs clacking noisily against the stones that slipped away beneath their feet and their three long fingers strained when curling over boulders in their struggle to ascend, then onto the crown they scrambled and looked upon the view. What they saw seemed a canyon that stretched to a good distance before a curve took its end away from their eyes. Its walls were of pale yellow stones that were as blocks set roughly in place like some massive tessellation and the heights tapered at the top where some of the blocks hung outwards as if to fall that moment, as others had for the base was scattered with smashed rock, though there was a wide and clear pathway of sandy floor that bore along with the canyon.

"Shall we go in?" said Upel to Ayon, "If your desire is to explore this moon-world of Dallazuel by foot we should not hesitate, else we age like yonder cliff."

Ayon looked at him and at the others and was unwilling to be poked from his will by their timid derision. They were amused at his intentions to search Dallazuel meticulously and not skim it by swift air ships selecting obvious sights for investigation.

This moon to a toxic scourged planet, was insignificant in size and was lodged coldly distant among the Ocrokkade system of worlds, most of them glorious in the savage splendour of their ruins.

Ayon nodded thoughtfully. "We will go in." and they descended into this silent and bright scar that gouged the surface of forlorn Dallazuel.

They coursed the route of the gouge slowly, examining the stratum that presented itself and tedious became the chosen way. At the apex of the bend there a spring was found, a clear water that held purity and they followed its run till it vanished into a crevice of rising cold draughts.

Nal, a geologist, looked away from the disappearing stream and pondered the pressing cliffs, his eyes roved and were sombre with inner gloom. "I have feelings for the contents of worlds my friends, and hers, and now, I tell you, this place is ill born. Let us retire, the stones have been read and a water hoard discovered. That is enough from here."

Ayon gripped his shoulder. "Tis only the rarity of movement and the alienness of the whole district that uneases you Nal. We will go to the canyon's end."

The six advanced thereon till they could see the road's last reach and where further high cliffs sealed off future progress.

"No exit ahead." said Nal, "And this is no canyon but a rift."

"And do I see something unrelated?" said Eid, the astronomer and the keenest discoverer among them. "Do you see just before the facing cliff, a rock assemblage seeming different in outline?"

Their twinkling ruby eyes saw the shape in the distance and towards it they went.

Their thin legs were halted soon by the impediment of mild surprise to their brains, then slower they stepped and amazedly did they stare at the creation in stone.

A dragon looked upon them. Its head obviously famed for destruction as great toothed jaws hung agape in a snarling untamed way; such a mouth could wreck the calm pond of civilisation and darken the light of inherited reason. There were two eyes that bulged and then elanted in an ugly fashion, a paler stone bringing effect to their glance. Six legs were attached to its slim belly, four gripped the ground for balance while two longer limbs

stretched and reached forward, eager to take what was near. To increase the vile image eight narrow wings arched upwards like snakey arms, and ragged skin drooped like played hide from them. The tail was split and hurried on to be as a fishes in likeness; spreading over the ground ere its tips curled lightly; how appalling will thy memory be for seeing such an exotic wonder.

The biologist, Zoln, walked its shade with admiring steps and at its rear he halted and his hands traced the curves of the flat tails, his long pointed face smiled and his voice ever deep with civilised tones spoke: "This mighty awe-filled monster that seems to stun comment is nothing but a pattern of myth," and his statement over, he took a slim case from a studded pouch and began recording images of the sculpture.

Nal stood below the mammoth head and serpentine neck contemplating their force, then with a final glance at the tails he spoke his quiet summary: "This place was once a lake of some strength till the waters eroded another path and the mere sunk speedily away."

"That's possible" said Ayon, "do you take your proof from the wear of the stones," and he observed the face of Nal and its wedded look to the alien statue, "or not I hope from the form of this beast, your gaze suggests that you believe that this thing was once reality and coursed this rift!"

"Yes, I accept that it did," said Nal.

Upel intermediated: "But Zoln considers it to be an imaginary work?"

Syyor the recorder came closer and spoke: "This moon of Dallazuel is not our world, yet this dragon speaks."

"Say more," said Nal.

Syyor the dignified recounted. "Remember if you can the craft found smashed and in orbit around verdant Protod. We were at base then and I was taken from your company by orders to record the scouting of the wreck. There was nothing significant towards the science trade there, just a ribbed shell burnt by explosive heat, but upon a plate still bright there was a dim impression of this very creature. I recorded it as a symbol of the fleet; a badge of recognition."

Ayon was studious ere he commented: "I remember the mission. But what does it prove? Only that those space voyagers were the possible erectors of this hybrid idol."

"True," said Syyor, "but there was evidence found upon the surface of Protod saying that the craft was from there, so, why did the Protodians voyage a light year to construct a reasonless structure here. They must have seen the likeness of this beast somewhere, maybe here and alive. But why such elaborate flattery to a creature, I do not really know."

"A diety," said Nal. "That is the timeless fact concerning terror-formed life, but only among primitives you might say, but this world is ancient, and the Protodians, whatever they appeared like could have been kin to this dragon, they could have been a barbaric brain-dead race of savages, they were alien and so any theory is valid. This far bare place was their point of pilgrimage or sacrifice."

Ayon laughed derisively: "My ears were keen in awaiting those words of sacrifice, the renowned religious and blood splashed act of propitiation, that darkens every gods shade and that one mind upon another imagines is the custom that belongs to all the mystery of the unknown tribes that are traced."

Nal shrugged his caprice shoulders: "It's the unadorned and simplest explanation," he replied blandly and onwards they flung origins and reasons upon their intellect.

Eid unlistening and strolling locally had reached the far wall of the dry rift. The cliff surface here was not the rough design of nature, here the rock was smooth and its yellow darker. The astronomer selected a sharp stone and curiously he jabbed hard the cliff face, the resound was strange with a climbing and deep sonorous echo that puzzled his ears.

Repeatedly he slammed stone onto stone till a piece was dislodged and beneath glinted an element that was not chaotically created; a smoothness dwelled there, dark in the shadow.

Eid called for attention and the discussing group came quickly. Each hand touched the discovery till Nal uncovered and then pressed the probe of his analyser there and read the gauge.

"Glass," he stated, "eight turnons thick, and water in a volume of five million parions." They were startled at the figure. "Also some alloy of strange qualities," Nal added wonderingly, "that seems to be vibrant in short bursts of activity."

They stared at the wall and the treated smoothness was very far reaching in height.

"There is strange and old science here," said Syyor.

"And such things we are seeking for," said Ayon and he told Upel to connect the sonic transmitter dish to its stand and they would split that veneer of stone. They retreated and Upel, by remote control, set the system in action. The small dish swung, automatically searching for the weakest region, then it bombarded the cliff site unmercifully.

The results were sudden as great shards slid, tumbled and dropped to the penetrating song

of the transmitter, and behind that curtain the front slope of a towering translucent orb appeared and dwarfed them in its construction and unbelievably therein was the existing myth; the aqueous dragon.

How frozen seemed time in those moments as the famed breed of explorer faced the vision slashing gloating eyes of aged evil that paced quickly in their sockets as they viewed the revealed delights of its starved madness.

The party immobilized by visual unexpectedness saw then to their terror the glass itself split and liquid poor outwards.

Ayon screamed at Upel: "The transmitter! Cancel it."

Upel's stumbling fingers depressed the stud, but a late task was that move for the sonic assault shattered the massive ball and torrents of water flashed forward, hungry for freedom.

The bearers of science raced away from those crushing volumes and they clambered up the tails of the stone effigy for sanctuary. The swarming flood reared high in its domain and filled the nooks and climbed the spaces it once knew, and soon that barbarous stone semblance upon whose spine beings stood for safety was a sunken isle, the water swirling about their thighs.

"There." spoke Syyor, his civilised tonee broken by events and he pointed to a whirlpool in the clear element and they all blanched as the head leapt from the deepness; a visage from the sub-conscious of each one's gehenna.

Space black was its skin, that glinted with metallic reflections from the day, its terrible eyes effilgent and hideous gold. Ophidian wings swept up and thrashed back many times like savage scouled cobras and its twin tails curling and rearing beat ungainly with a thunderous smacking upon the surface waters: this is how it came.

Mesmeration trembled them, and these explorers from proud housed Glarthene were shaken into the flood and they swam in desperate ways till the burning eyed obese entity submerged and took its sporty propitiation.

LULLABY for a BABY HORROR-STORY WRITER

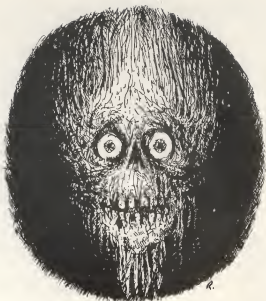
The taste of nightshade gladdening,
The touch of darkness maddening,
The toll of death-bell saddening,
And jack-o'-lantern light;

The chill of corpses smouldering,
The hiss of witch fires smouldering,
And mortal men's cold-shouldering -
These claim as your birthright.

Fear not, for no angelic ray,
No holy day, no holiday,
No hope, no resurrection-day,
Can dawn upon your sight.



marion Pitman



about the painting of the split man

(Progression one)

THE SPLIT MAN:
A LEGEND WHO TRAVERSED THE BRUSH STROKE
AND BECAME
REALITY TO ITS MAN.
HE SAW HIM,
STANDING BY THE PORTRAIT.
NOW THEY SAY THAT
THE ARTIST IS MAD.

(Progression two)

HE SAW HIM STANDING, HIS OWN CREATION,
THAT YEARS AND YEARS OF APPLICATION
HAD SQUEEZED OUT.
THE SPLIT MAN:
HIS EXPLANATION, MAD AS SINCE.

(Progression three)

ALL HE PAINTS ARE SPLIT MEN NOW,
HIS MINISTRY,
HIS LIFE AND SLEEP.
- THE ARTIST IS MAD.

Stephen Walker

M. P. SHIEL:

An Appreciation

by Michael Barrett

Matthew Phipps Shiel is probably known to the average reader of Fantasy as the author of a remarkable novel entitled *THE PURPLE CLOUD*; others may also be aware of *THE LORD OF THE SEA* or *THE ISLE OF LIES*, and could have come across the anthologised short story *The House of Sounds*.

What many people will not be aware of is that during his lifetime, Shiel saw the publication of some thirty books, mostly long novels, of which almost a half are fantasy orientated; *THE PURPLE CLOUD*, whilst arguably his best work, was not the pinnacle of his literary output, but simply an example of the style and imagination with which the majority of his books are instilled. Shiel's writings are crammed with extraordinary events, global catastrophes, vivid action and memorable characters.

The scope of the novels was vast and varied: *THE PURPLE CLOUD* (1901) sees nearly all humanity destroyed by an Arctic plague and tells of the exploits of the last man left alive; Chinese hordes devastate the world in *THE YELLOW DANGER* (1898); *THIS ABOVE ALL* (1933) is about immortality; in *THE LORD OF THE SEA* (1901) the world's oceans are dominated by force; scientifically contrived miracles bring about the downfall of Christianity in *THE LAST MIRACLE* (1909), and *THE YOUNG MEN ARE COMING!* (1937) deals with aliens, time travel and civil war in an

England of the future. Even this short summary should demonstrate Shiel's versatility - the novels are nearly all totally different to one another (with a notable exception, mentioned later) and the author never wrote a sequel.

Apart from the novel, Shiel was a master of the short story form: *Xelucha* is one of the finest tales of horror ever written, closely followed by the atmospheric *House of Sounds*. H. P. Lovecraft enthused over both of these stories, praising them highly, and it was perhaps only because he never read them that HPL was not equally impressed by such others as *Tulesah*, *The Primrose of the Rose*, *Phorfor* and *Dark Lot of One Saul*. The slim volume of tales entitled *PRINCE ZALESKI* (1895), Shiel's first book, introduced an outre detective who was a harbinger of the psychic sleuth later to be introduced by Hodgson and Blackwood, and *The Place of Pain* has the contemporary sounding theme of a philosopher's discovery of a gateway affording a view into other dimensions, wherein lurk beings that drive men mad (shades of shoggoths!).

Shiel's style of writing was unique, an intense personalised prose that the unfamiliar reader cannot always find easy to appreciate insofar as novels are concerned. As an example, here is the opening paragraph of *This Above All*:

'It appears that, moving among us - now, even as I write these lines - there is a being - indeed, two, three, four! - of whose existence we have no suspicion, one or other of whom may this day sit at table with me, shake my hand, say "nice day", and I'd never divins - unless some inetic should prick me...? Or there may be more - for all ons knows. But ah! the curious group of souls - if it is a truth that they are about.'

This is typical Shiel in several respects - the headlong tumbling into the story (the narrator is talking about immortals), the abrupt phrasing and broken sentences, the irregularity of the writing and of beginning a novel. He disregarded accepted grammatical structure and standard writing techniques, seeming to dislike conjunctions and sentences of normal length. And yet, for all the apparent eccentricities of style, Shiel's clashing prose is a total success, rich and literate, once the reader can accept this radical departure from the orthodox.

From *THE DRAGON* (1913), one of his best future warfare novels, here is the sinking of a battleship:

'...and she set to stuttering such tons of thundering, like Etna rhetoric, as no tongue can tell: took the ocean and shook it, as dreader and still dreader she roared and roared in that redness of her death throes, whilst what was left of her 800 men were seen through a volcano of reek leaping from her in every direction like sprats spluttering from a trapnet...'

Shiel's breathless prose is particularly compelling in such descriptions of warfare - from the same novel, witness the alliterative flair combining with vivid imagery as another warship is blown to pieces: 'all in the shout of one sharp shower; and she lay a flagrant log on a crimson sea...'

The basic plot of this particular novel, that is, the upheavance of Asiatic hordes and their attempt to suborn the world, is one which evidently had a particular appeal as far as Shiel was concerned - he used the idea three times, in *THE YELLOW DANGER*, *THE YELLOW WAVE* (1906) and *THE DRAGON*, the latter being helpfully retitled *THE YELLOW PERIL* on reissue in 1929. At his death, the author left a completely revised version of *THE YELLOW DANGER* entitled *CHINA AT ARMS*; if this had ever been published, one assumes that it would have been retitled *THE YELLOW MENACE*!

Shiel was in fact a compulsive revisionist. When Collanz reissued five of his novels in 1929, each one was revised, three of them to the extent that hardly a paragraph was not radically altered, and this pattern of comprehensive revision was one which he followed often with both novels and short stories; *Vaila* was altered to the point of even changing the name of the island, the story finally emerging in much different form as *The House of Sounds*.

A criticism which has been levelled at M. P. Shiel is his tendency to incorporate in many of his works personal points of view and philosophical ideas, as well as social and moral commentary, either through his characters or as an epilogue to the culmination of a series of events. This applies only to the novels, and to a certain extent is true - both *THE LAST MIRACLE* and *THE DRAGON*, excellent fantasies though they both are, would have greater impact without their anticlimactic finales. It can be argued that this discursiveness adds to the overall effect, uniquely Shiel as it is; for while the stories deal with personalities mighty in their love, hatred or perversity, relentlessly pursuing their fate, the clear hand of the author is always present in the background, although the style of writing never overshadows the story.

Another trait in Shiel's books is his regular indifference to his heroes, few of his stories having conventional endings for the principals, although global events do tend to be resolved satisfactorily. A recurrent theme is that of the 'overman', the individual who rises to dominance by virtue of intellect, perception and often singleness of mind. And yet paradoxically, the overman is capable of remarkable lapses of judgement. In particular, Hogarth in *THE LORD OF THE SEA* and Lepsius in *THE ISLE OF LIES* (1909), both having risen to mastery of the globe, show a complete lack of foresight in their passive forbearance of characters who it is quite apparent will ultimately bring about their downfall.

But for all their shortcomings, Shiel's principals are certainly memorable: apart from those bizarre detectives Prince Zaleski and Cummings King Monk, and the already mentioned Hogarth and Lepsius, there were Adam Jeffson, John Hardy, Podd, Caxton Hazlett and Haco Harfager, as well as such remarkable women as Oyone, Rachel and Mahndoria...the list could go on and on.

Scenes remain long in the reader's mind, perhaps most notably from *THE PURPLE CLOUD* when Adam Jeffson continues his mad orgy of destruction, setting a torch to a dead world:

'...burning and burning, during four months, leaving in my rear reeking regions, a tract of ravage, like some being of the Pit that blights where his wings of fire pass...'

Then there is the destruction of the grim mansion of the ice in *The House of Sounde*; the sea battles in *THE DRAGON*; Max Deee' etarkly drawn death in *THE LAST MIRACLE*; the prison escape in *THE LORD OF THE SEA* - some people have found Shiel brilliant and others incomprehensible, but no one could ever use the word 'forgettable'.

M. P. Shiel was born on 21 July 1865 and died in Chichester Hospital on 17 February 1947. His books were successful in their time and the best titles have been regularly re-issued, but it is a sad fact that for all the acclaim he received from such notables as H. G. Wells, Arthur Machen, and J. B. Priestly, Shiel is virtually unknown today. Last year Arkham House published a collection of the best short stories, *XELUCHA AND OTHERS* (a volume which was originally announced as forthcoming in 1948!) and one can only hope that before too long an enlightened publisher may reissue some of his best novels, and so introduce many more readers to the dazzling worlds of M. P. Shiel. For despite his minor faults, Shiel was a mighty writer who at even the most conservative of estimates produced a dozen novels and short stories which genuinely rank amongst the very best in fantasy.

~~~~~

## Letters of Comment ~

From DAVID SUTTON, Birmingham:

DARK HORIZONS 12: A superb issue of a magazine that improves with each issue, notwithstanding my interview on page 17! The artists, Dave Fletcher, Russ Nicholson, Alan Hunter, Jim Pitts and Steve Fabian - what more or better could you ask? The Hunter cover is really striking, giving one a sense of worlds far away. The thing with Alan Hunter as an artist, I find, is that his work is either very, very good or rather lame. His illustration for Mike Chinn's story is beautifully detailed, but the reptilian creature in the foreground just doesn't come off and it spoils the rest of the drawing somewhat. The Fletcher back cover is just right for a back cover, which is not to denigrate the quality of the piece I hasten to add. It was a delight to see Jim Pitts this time with an SF illustration, and the drawing, while having a kind of 'pulp' look to it, is superb and suits the story very nicely. Russ Nicholson's figure on page 28, 29 and 31 are great, but his illo for the Campbell story was a real let-down. And finally, the addition of Steve Fabian to DH's pages will be welcomed by all since I'm sure there are not many who would criticise his gorgeous tones and his rendering of the fantasy world.

Mike Ashley's articles on the fantasy magazines are fascinating and give one an insight into periodicals that many of us have never seen. His piece on FORGOTTEN FANTASY does show up its faults as a fantasy magazine, but - as a fanzine editor - it is very interesting to hear about the level of production and the contents and the ideals behind a small press item such as this. Mike Ashley's piece also reveals his love of fantasy magazines and his personal stance in the article goes a long way to make the article - in essence a catalogue of the contents - a very readable and enjoyable item.

Adrian's article on the lesser heroes of heroic fantasy is building up the series into a formidable account of the characters from the fantasy world. With the addition of the Fabian and Nicholson illustrations, the thing becomes a nicely laid out and very enjoyable read. My only disappointment was the shortness of the paragraphs on Moorcock's 'lesser' heroes, but perhaps this is because he happens to be my favourite of the Heroic Fantasy writers that I've read. Adrian obviously has his favourites, but I think he tries to put the information across with a balanced approach. I'm looking forward to the final part of the essay.

It's good to see Eddy Bertin writing for a fanzine again. He did so much for SHADOW and helped me make it one of the best fanzines then being produced. Of course, I began a European Terror series in SHADOW, where Eddy would write about an unknown or little-known European horror story writer each issue and it is good to see DH continue the series, but moreso that Eddy Bertin's name has appeared again in a UK fanzine. Eddy will no doubt read this letter (if it's printed) and therefore one can only hope that he'll be encour-

to continue fanzine work, perhaps not as prolifically as he did in the days of SHADOW and the horror fanzines, but I'm sure many fans miss him.

Onto the fiction. I think I'll reserve judgement on Mike Chinn's saga until I've had the opportunity to read the whole thing in one go. Of the other two, Alan Eames' story came across as the better. Although strictly an SF story, it was very well written and had an aura of mounting but hidden horror. The story of a man's mental destruction builds up with incredible eloquence to the paragraph where he is trapped in the tower and the terrors build up to a rare old pitch of tension. That the character only imagines the shape of his adversary gives the descriptions of parasite's approach up the stairway a sense of the terrible unknown and as such, along with all the other salient horrors of the story, the mental and physical collapse of the character and the growth of the parasitic tics on his body, we have here a very good horror tale, despite its SF setting. I certainly hope we see more of Alan's fiction in future issues of DH.

Ramsey Campbell's tale, on the other hand was less powerful, which is unusual for me because I'm rarely unimpressed with his horror stories. Like the horror in Parasites, the Shadows in the Barn are never fully revealed. Campbell is the master of subtlety in terror. His supernatural monsters, ghosts etc., scare the pants off me usually, but not through overt descriptions. His turns of phrase and his stylish writing gives his work a level of terror that really does work. He seems to be able to get inside the consciousness and see exactly what symbols create fear and how much and how little description is necessary for the story to be just right and not to topple over. He has been accused in the past of under-writing his ghosts to such an extent that nobody can appreciate any terrors he is trying to impart. This, while I think totally untrue, is a valid point with Shadows in the Barn perhaps. Anyway, the story didn't gel like his normally do with me, but it will be very interesting to read the final draft of the story when it appears in his next Arkham anthology.

I think that's enough rambling for one letter, but DH, to make a final comment, is a good, solid read and the variety of the contents make it all one could wish for in a general fantasy magazine. ((After that, all I can say is thank you Dave for your comments, and I only wish a few more of the LoC's I receive went into the same depth of criticism. SJ.))

From, JONATHAN SMITH, Leatherhead:

Re: They Who Oppose Chaos, Part two; Adrian Cole appeared to totally misunderstand who Carter was trying to sell the 'Jandar' books to. They were intended not for those ignorant of Burroughs' novels, but for people who cannot read as much new Burroughs as they would like.

In the epilogue to UNDER THE GREEN STAR he admits that the Jandar books are frankly imitative. Yet, here is Cole condemning Carter for imitating frankly. We are instructed to try and ignore all copied ideas, and be left with a 'mundane stereotype'. Ignoring the imitation is an imitation is absurd.

The next paragraph has spacious comment about Carter's style and the condemnation of cliff-hanger endings, laughably followed by Cole saying that he uses them - but only in a trilogy, of course!

From, ALAN HUNTER, Bournemouth:

Without any doubt, this is your best issue to date. The artwork was good - especially the Fabian full-pager, ably supported by Dave Fletcher, Jim Pitts (including his first ever science fiction illustration) and Russ Nicholson, whose artwork is excellent. Also, I notice, you have taken heed of Jon Harvey's suggestion in the letter section and distributed the art more evenly throughout the issue. In addition, each drawing was relevant to the piece it illustrated. The overall effect was visually pleasing.

The stories were good, the articles excellent and the poetry evocative, providing a varied and interesting list of contents. It is going to be hard to improve on the standard set this issue. However, just to prevent you becoming too complacent I will dig deep to unearth just a couple of criticisms - the poem Fragment at the foot of page 25 should have had some embellishment, however small (it looks so cold, lying there unadorned) and the mag cover repros were rather disappointing, although this is probably a technical problem hampered by your financial budget.

From, MIKE CHINN, Smethwick:

With regard to DH12: another excellent issue, well-balanced and pleasing to the eye. Well done.

As for the artwork: well, after the Steve Fabian illo there's not much I can say; that one piece made the entire issue as far as I'm concerned. That's not to say the other art-

ists were inadequate by any means; Alan Hunter's illo to my own tale was very appropriate, but I can't help thinking that the figure of Salin Thur was a little tubby; a small complaint, but still... Dave Fletcher's back-cover was also most impressive.

The fiction was nicely varied, and I was very pleased to see the piece by Ramsey Campbell, short but effective. The Alan Eames tale I also liked, even though it was a little difficult to follow, but I wonder if it wasn't out of place in DH? There was a certain fantasy element, I'll grant you, but it seemed to me to be more sf-orientated than need be for DH. (I suppose that'll start another "What is sf, and what is fantasy?" argument. Ho hum).

Doesn't Mike Ashley ever run out of facts on magazines? He must collect them like I do insults and pitying glances - that's to say: all the time. Adrian Cole's article is worth printing even if only for his comments on the amazing Lin Carter - the only person who seems to take Carter seriously is Carter himself, it appears; bloody good job, too, if you ask me. (So Jon Harvey read the Thongor series twice? No wonder he writes so bitterly).

And while I'm on the subject of the letters, I'd like to add my own comments on Marion Pitman's letter from DHll, after Glen Symonds: it beats me why she wrote the letter in the first place; a postcard with "I didn't like DH10" written on the back would have said all she wanted. It's a pity someone who writes such good poetry writes such awful "letters". I'm surprised you bothered to print it; or am I correct in assuming you didn't have any other letters?

Do you think, in future, letters of comment should qualify their comments, either good or bad, and not simply register a negative vote? ((I always try to print the best of the small number of LoC's I receive; perhaps if more people wrote, the selection would be a little more critical. Now guess whose LoC is next... SJ)).

#### From, MARION PITMAN, East Molesley:

The cover's good. Thanks for the compliment in the editorial. The best bits, obviously, are pp.10 & 25. I would have thought someone would have got the point about Mahkra; Uhluthic is fairly obvious, and Tfarcevolph cries out to be stood on its head. Perhaps none of the BFS do crossword puzzles. I should be fascinated, though, to discover if anyone grasps the significance of Imazax.

The Second Dragons (I have yet to grasp the significance of the title) is tolerably gripping, but it doesn't help it to have such a vast hiatus between episodes. I don't like the ill., the lizard-men look simply silly. P.18 doesn't come off very well either. P.20 is o.k. Interview with D. Sutton - do you really talk like that? It's quite interesting though (feasible).

Ramsey Campbell's story's very good, I like it better than his others I've read. I don't feel the ill. adds anything.

The Fabian ill.'s nice, it's not flat like so much of this stuff, it has a feeling of depth.

A. Cole's article doesn't go into enough detail to be really interesting, and it's not very amusing either. A good lead-in to a series elaborating on the theme.

Parasites is very good, very nasty.

Vignette - parts of it are excellent, particularly the second half. But like so many of your contributors, even Gordon Larkin, whose work I respect, he (the poet) sometimes gets Carried Away. If he'd only show a little restraint, & avoid cutting solid things like monasteries from insubstantial fabrics like the texture of night, in fact, thoroughly overhaul the first nine lines and polish the rest, it'd be a good poem.

Odd little piece by E. C. Bertin.

James Parker. I do wish people would stop putting things (and people) into little boxes. O.K., so a lot of Harpic Fantasy is stereotyped and uninventive. So is a lot of other writing. That doesn't mean it's impossible to write good H.F. I don't what he means about nostalgia. Jung is not an old friend of mine. As for Mr. Parker's definition of potent fantasy, I disagree; anyway, things take different people different ways. No, I haven't forgotten Poe, but I'm trying, I'm trying.

Jon Harvey must be a masochist. It's as much as I could do to read one soporific Thongor book once. One thing I must say, though - I like Carter's short stories.

Glen B. Symonds. For heaven's sake (I use the term deliberately) why should all the possibilities of the universe be horrible and monstrous? If Mr. Symonds looks at the stars and can only see horrors, I am deeply sorry for him; I can only hope he didn't mean that seriously. I honestly cannot imagine being in such a hellish state. Well, not often.

G. B. S. can't have read much in the way of incredible statements, is all I can say.

I hope Mr. Symonds likes my poetry better than my views.





# AMAZING STORIES

APRIL  
25 Cents



**A  
COSMIC  
JUKEBOX  
SCAN**

